2025 ELECTIONS

For Select Board: Paras Bhayani

WILL DOWD | STAFF WRITER

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Paras Bhayani. COURTESY PHOTO

How many years have you lived in Winchester? Five years. My wife and I live here with our two young daughters. We were drawn here by the town's schools, natural beauty and reputation as a close-knit communit

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excited to help strengthen the town we intend to call home for decades to come.

Please describe your professional background and education. I bring considerable public and private sector financial expertise to Winchester, along with a collaborative approach to problem-solving. I have substantial experience in corporate finance and business strategy, including as a private equity investor and corporate strategist at the world's largest asset manager and at a top-tier consulting firm. Before my private sector career, I spent several years in the public sector, including as the head of a $1.7 billion operating and capital budget for the city of Chicago's transit authority, gaining substantial experience with operating budgets, labor agreements, pension finance, rating agencies and municipal bond issuances, among other topics. I received my undergraduate degree from Harvard College and Master of Business Administration from Harvard Business School with distinction.

What Winchester town positions (appointed or elected) have you held, and for how long? During my time in Winchester, I have been extensively involved in education issues as a founding member of the early literacy focused Winchester Literacy Initiative for Change, which is a parent-led group focused on strengthening Winchester Public Schools' early literacy curriculum. At the state level, I am a past board member of the Massachusetts Sierra Club, serve on the Massachusetts board of OneGoal and have been involved in Massachusetts' Early College efforts at a policy and strategy level.

What are the primary issues motivating your candidacy? The select board's job is to serve as good stewards of Winchester--for our residents today and for the next generation. This means focusing on four key areas: managing town & schools funding in a responsible, balanced manner; tackling our large backlog of capital projects; increasing access t

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housing of all types; driving economic development in the town; and strengthening our excellent efforts on climate and sustainability.

Select Board-specific questions

Given Winchester's $2.89 million structural deficit, what specific measures would you propose while maintaining essential services?
We have a challenging budget situation before us, and we will need a combination of carefully considered efficiencies and new revenue to balance the budget while protecting our fiscal health and stellar credit ratings.

I will work with the town manager and other board members to find efficiencies where possible, including areas where we can use off-the-shelf technology to automate processes, expand the use of strategic and joint purchasing to achieve better rates for large cost categories and better utilize town assets to generate income.

At the same time, the 2019 override was designed to last four years and it has lasted six years already. With inflation far above the Proposition 2½ cap during that time, we will likely need additional revenue to meet the town and WPS' operating and capital needs.

What is your comprehensive vision for affordable housing in Winchester, particularly regarding the 160 Forest Street development?
Winchester has started to make progress on housing development, which is critical to addressing our affordability crisis. As a general matter, I am in favor of thoughtful infill developments on the limited space we have available. Collaborative, proactive planning to create a pipeline of well-designed infill projects can also help us forestall hostile 40Bs.

I support projects like the "friendly" development on Cross Stree
should also complete projects like Washington & Swanton, where the town

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has already invested $5.3 million, and which will provide over 100 units on land that is already developed, underutilized and near transit. I would focus on redevelopment of already developed land and avoid development on wooded land and other open space. The project at 160 Forest Street could become a model for small-scale, collaborative, community-led affordable housing development, converting a single family, market rate home to one or two affordable units, if the house is renovated with an ADU.

I also believe Winchester responded thoughtfully to the MBTA Communities Act. The adopted plan complies with state law and allows for infill housing in the best place to build: adjacent to our transit assets and town center.

What specific initiatives would you propose to expand Winchester's commercial tax base and enhance economic development in the town center?

I would focus on initiatives to encourage small business growth, including:

—Prioritizing mixed-use development in the center and corridors like North Main Street, which drives footfall and vibrancy

—Agreeing on parking solutions like adding spaces through "re-striping" the roadways where possible and encouraging workable compromises on topics like outdoor dining that balance the needs of restaurants and merchants

—Working with town staff to implement technology solutions to digitize and streamline approvals, permits, applications and other processes to make Winchester an easier place to open, operate and grow a business

—Maintaining the present real estate classification system to not shift the burden to our small commercial base

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Have questions for Bhayani? Contact him at parasforwinchester.com or parasforwinchester@gmail.com.

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2025 ELECTIONS

Write-in votes, Winchester election results now final

Election 2025 is now over. The results from the March 22 townwide elections have been certified by the Town Clerk's office. Town Clerk MaryEllen Marshall released the final numbers March 27, with 17.3% of Winchester residents casting a vote in the election, or 2,951 votes, out of

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March 27, 2025

NEWS

Newcomers win spots on Winchester Select Board, School Committee

It was the perfect Election Day — warm and sunny, with a steady stream of residents going into Winchester High School to cast their ballots. Preliminary results for the March 22 townwide election show 17.2 % of residents voted on Saturday. That's 2,933 votes cast, out of the town'

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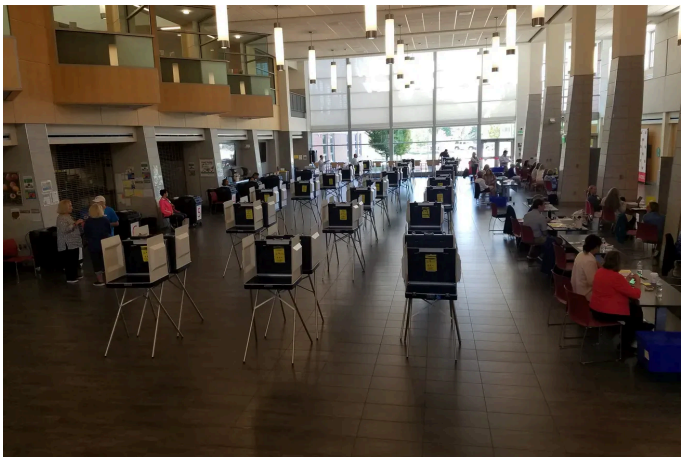

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NEWS

Winchester Planning Board write-ins emerge ahead of Saturday election

Winchester voters head to the polls Saturday for municipal elections featuring contested races for Select Board and School Committee alongside an unexpected development — two write-in candidates vying for a Planning Board seat that initially have no contenders on the ballot. The March 22 election will take place at Winchester High

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March 21, 2025

NEWS

Philip Frattaroli to be Winchester's 12th town moderator since 1915

It's a foregone conclusion. Philip Frattaroli will be Winchester's next town moderator. Sure, the townwide election is just days away, but Frattaroli is running unopposed for the seat being vacated by Heather von Mering, who has been in the role since March 2020. "I decided to take it

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March 20, 2025

Latest

EVENTS

Celebrate Women's History Month with Girls Leading Change

The following was submitted by the Network for Social Justice: To mark Women's History Month and International Women's Day in 2026, the Network for Social Justice is collaborating with club leaders from Winchester High School and members of the Community Health team from La Colaborativa in Chelsea and

March 4, 2026

NEWS

Winchester School Committee candidates bring contrasting backgrounds to Thursday forum

Two candidates for Winchester's School Committee will face voters at a forum as the district navigates a new literacy curriculum, budget pressures and questions about student mental health. Heath[illegible] and John Bellaire are comp[illegible] seat on the School Committe[illegible] oversees a budget von

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March 4, 2026

FEATURES

‘Chicago: Teen Edition’ dances onto the Winchester High School stage

By Talia Ho | Correspondent Fame. Fortune. And all that jazz. This spring, Winchester High School presents “Chicago: Teen Edition,” a bold musical that explores celebrity culture, media manipulation, and the cost of ambition. This iconic production is set in the 1920s. Performances will take place on March 13 and 14

SPECIAL TO THE NEWS

March 4, 2026

EVENTS

Ripley Chapel in Winchester presents ‘Syldason: You Are Welcome Here’

The following was submitted by the Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church: On Friday, March 13, beginning at 7:30 p.m., live in-person and live streamed from the stunning Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church, Winchester, 21 Church St., join in with Syldason, a duo concert featuring Sylvie Zakarian,

March 4, 2026

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